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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire is presented to be used in the evaluation of cooperating teachers by the students whose field-based preservice teaching they are supervising. The questionnaire has been designed to fill a gap in the evaluation of student teaching experiences: too often the cooperating teacher has been unevaluated or has received merely informal feedback on his/her supervisory capacity. The questionnaire consists of nineteen items (more may be added by the cooperating teacher if the need is felt) investigating such behaviors as availability, critical expertise, communications skills, goal development and direction, and observation skills. (MJB)

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TEACHER CANDIDATES PROVIDE FORMAL FEEDBACK FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

G. Thomas Baer

The role of cooperating teachers is perhaps the most crucial factor in determining the success or failure of the student teaching experience. Since it is cooperating teachers who work most closely with teacher candidates, it is they who have the greatest opportunity to assist candidates toward developing into effective teachers. Yet, cooperating teachers are often forgotten in the evaluation process. It appears that teacher candidates are always evaluated by cooperating teachers and college supervisors, college supervisors are usually evaluated by teacher candidates, but rarely are cooperating teachers formally evaluated by teacher candidates.

This was the case in the Joliet Teacher Education Center (JTEC). Although feedback from teacher candidates was provided to cooperating teachers, it was done so in a nonpersonal manner. Consequently, teachers were not receiving feedback which related directly to their individual performances as cooperating teachers. The questionnaire which fcllows was developed to provide cooperating teachers with formalized, specific feedback.

The procedures for using the instrument are as follows:

1. The instrument is sent to all cooperating teachers so they may examine the questions and add other items they want evaluated.

SP011 297

2. If cooperating teachers want feedback from their teacher candidates they return their individualized forms to the JTEC.

(Given the opportunity to receive teacher candidate feedback, over ninety percent of the cooperating teachers have taken advantage of the option.)

3. During the last week of the semester all teacher candidates who were requested to do so complete their individualized instrument. These evaluations are returned to cooperating teachers after teacher candidates have completed their semester experience. JTEC personnel do not examine the contents of these evaluations. However, teacher candidates complete similar feedback instruments for the JTEC which are identifiable only as to school. (This procedure is followed to allow teacher candidates an opportunity to be as open and honest as possible.)

4. Encouragement to comment on each question is given to teacher candidates before they complete their instruments. They are also reminded that suggestions for improvement are desirable when rankings are low.

Cooperating teachers have indicated that they value the formal feedback received from teacher candidates. Many have shown a willingness to use these evaluations as a means of identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. More excitingly, some have asked JTEC personnel for assistance in working with them to increase their skills as cooperating teachers.

TEACHER CANDIDATE FEEDBACK INSTRUMENT FOR COOPERATING TEACHERS

Please evaluate my overall success at being a cooperating teacher. This information will be helpful in improving my effectiveness in working with future teacher candidates.

1. My cooperating teacher made herself available for conferencing when necessary.

   strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

2. The criticisms and suggestions of my cooperating teacher were helpful in improving my teaching.

   strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

3. Specific comments were made on my teaching activities by my cooperating teacher.

   strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

4. I received adequate feedback from my cooperating teacher on my daily lessons and long range goals.

   strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

5. I came from conferences with my cooperating teacher feeling positive and challenged.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

6. My cooperating teacher sandwiched suggestions with positive reinforcement.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

7. The areas in which I needed improvement were clearly defined by my cooperating teacher.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

8. My cooperating teacher specifically outlined goals so that I knew what she expected of me.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

9. My cooperating teacher was decisive in directing my learning progress.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

10. My cooperating teacher made an adequate amount of observations to get a clear picture of me as a teacher.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

11. My cooperating teacher and I had an adequate discussion and explanation of my mid-term and final evaluation.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

12. I felt as though I could talk over any problem with my cooperating teacher.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

13. I felt as though my cooperating teacher encouraged me to develop my own "style" as a teacher.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

14. I was given adequate assistance by my cooperating teacher in locating materials and information from various sources.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

15. I was given enough time and opportunity to adjust to the children and the situation before taking over the class planning.

strongly agree___ agree___ disagree___ strongly disagree___

Comment:

16. Name the one characteristic of your cooperating teacher's techniques as a critic teacher that you would modify.

17. Name the one characteristic you feel was your cooperating teacher's strong point.

18. Name at least one experience that you feel you did not receive that you needed to make your student teaching more complete.

19. Please make any comments you feel would be helpful to cooperating teachers.

COOPERATING TEACHERS - Please add any additional items below that you would like your teacher candidate to evaluate: ___